

Body Venture's Learning Stations

At each of Body Venture's eleven stations, a volunteer presents information using a written script and engages the students in a five-minute activity focused on healthy choices. The tour begins in the school lunchroom when students, in groups of eight to ten, receive a food tag designating them as a “food” such as a carrot, strawberry or piece of cheese. The second stop is the brain. Inside the huge brain dome, students experience “brain waves” and learn about brain function. The “foods” step into the exhibit's larger-than-life mouth, are “swallowed” through the esophagus tunnel and move into the stomach dome. From the stomach, the students travel through the small intestine where they become nutrients and then travel through the heart, lungs, bones, muscles and skin stations. Students leave the body through a cut in the skin and proceed through Power Panther's Pathway to Life. This final station recaps key health concepts from each of the ten previous stations. Throughout the exhibit, students learn how to apply Power Panther's slogan:

EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.

It takes each group of students about an hour to complete the Body Venture tour.

Lunchroom

In the school lunchroom, students are introduced to Power Panther and his **EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.** message. Students receive a food tag bookmark and become a “food” such as a carrot, strawberry or a piece of cheese. Using a large MyPlate poster, students learn about how important it is to **EAT SMART** by choosing foods everyday from each of the MyPlate groups.



Brain

Students enter the large, free-standing, domed Brain Station through one ear and exit through the other. Inside the brain, kids sit on a “squishy” foam material that is designed to resemble brain matter. As the volunteer presenter begins, students learn that you use your brain everyday to make important choices in your life. One of these choices is about how much food to eat. Food models are used to show what a serving of French fries looks like. Another food model shows a “super-sized” serving of French fries. If you super-size your meals, you’re eating too much. Your brain sends messages to all parts of your body and controls everything your body does. Two battery-powered strobe lights inside the brain dome simulate “brain impulses.” Students are told that each of the flashes is like a message from your brain being sent to all parts of the body. The messages are carried by nerves.





Mouth

Students enter the main body structure through a larger-than-life mouth. They walk across the large tongue carpet and enter the Mouth Station. Inside the mouth, students sit on stools shaped like teeth. The volunteer presenter discusses the importance of eating foods with calcium to build strong teeth. Students have the opportunity to learn the correct way to brush using a giant toothbrush to brush the large teeth. Using the tooth stools, they also use a piece of rope and learn the correct way to floss. “Mr. Gross Mouth” is a hands-on prop that emphasizes the importance of avoiding tobacco products.

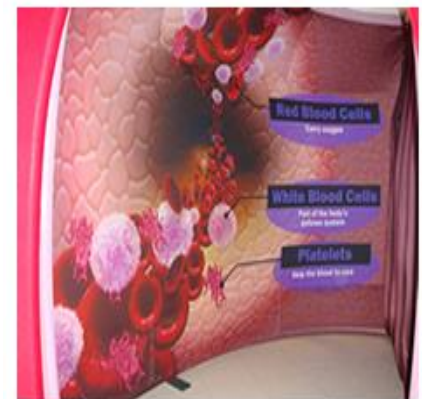
Stomach

In the Stomach Station, students learn about digestion. The script presented informs students that the stomach is like a stretchy bag that holds food after it is eaten. When the stomach is empty, it shrinks like a balloon without air. As you eat, your stomach gets larger and larger. If you eat too much, you can get a stomachache. The Stomach Station also includes a sandwich-building activity. This activity reinforces the important concept of choosing foods from MyPlate presented in the School Lunchroom Station.



Small Intestine

Students enter the Small Intestine Station from the stomach. The small intestine station is a 20-foot long tunnel. Students are told that digestion that began in the mouth and stomach continues in the small intestine as food becomes tiny particles called nutrients. The interior of the small intestine has “villi” hanging from the ceiling. Students learn that the villi absorb the nutrients from our food. The nutrients get between the villi and then go through the intestinal wall into the blood stream. Students also learn that villi in the body are tiny and hair-like. A discussion is included on the importance of fluid in the body. At the end of the small intestine tunnel, a large graphic of the bloodstream represents the absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream.



Heart

In the Heart Station, students learn about the four chambers in the heart. They also learn that too much fat in the diet is unhealthy for the heart and may cause clogged blood vessels. Tubes of fat show the amounts of fat in various food items---a big mac, fries, and ice cream. The greater amount of fat in these items is then compared to the lesser amount of fat in frozen yogurt. A pulse stick is used to emphasize the importance of physical activity to keep the heart healthy. A student is asked to volunteer to put their hands on the pulse stick to show how fast their heart beats. Then that volunteer jumps up and down and uses the pulse stick again to show their increased heart rate.



Lungs

In the Lungs Station, the dark grey smoker's lung is a favorite prop. The lung shows that if you smoke, the tars and nicotine in the smoke can make your lungs grey instead of pink. **PLAYING HARD** is an important concept learned in the lungs. Physical activity is good for your lungs just like it is good for your heart. In this station, kids participate in an activity to learn what breathing is like if you have emphysema.

Bones

In the Bones Station, students learn about the importance of having three servings from the MyPyramid milk group everyday. Food models are used to emphasize that you can have yogurt or cheese instead of a glass of milk. Students learn that our bones are called our skeleton. Our bodies have 206 bones. Our bones are long, short, round, flat, big and little. About 100 of our bones are in our hands and feet. Our smallest bone is in our ear, and it is smaller than a grain of rice. Kids love the real cow bone used in this body station and learn that their bones look like the cow bone but are much smaller.



Muscles

Some of the props used in the Muscles Station include one pound replicas of fat and of muscle. Kids are amazed to learn that muscle is much more compact than fat making it healthier in the body. To provide fuel when kids are **PLAYING HARD**, muscles need carbohydrates from the grain, vegetable and fruit groups. Carbohydrates come from breads, pastas, fruits and starchy vegetables. To keep muscles strong, kids learn they need protein from the meat & beans group and the milk group. In this station, they participate in a stretching activity to emphasize the importance of stretching our muscles.



Skin

In the Skin Station, students learn that it's important to take care of their skin on both the inside and the outside. Skin is protective covering for all of the other body parts that they have learned about in the previous stations. One way we can take good care of our skin is by being careful to avoid cuts, scrapes and bruises. But if we do injure our skin, it's important to clean cuts with soap and water and keep them covered. Protein and vitamin C help heal cuts in the skin. In this station, there is a fun activity where "pretend germs" are sprayed on a child's hand and everyone can see them under the black light. Then that child shakes hands with another child. Then everyone looks at both the hands of both children under the black light to learn how easily germs are spread. Students leave the body through a cut in the skin. The cut is shown on one side of the exit curtain and on the opposite side, the cut is covered with a bandage.

Pathway to Life

The Pathway to Life is a review all of the important concepts learned in the other body stations. The Pathway has many graphics of Power Panther engaged in various activities. Power Panther helps kids remember the information presented.

